

Through the Bible Book by Book

New Testament

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ACTS

Acts 1 to 5

Theme: The book of Acts gives the history of the establishment and growth of the Christian church, and of the proclaiming of the Gospel to the then known world according to Christ's command and by the power of His Spirit. It is a record of Christ's ministry as it was continued through His servants. Leon Tucker suggests the following key words:

- Ascension,
- Descension,
- Extension.

The ascension of Christ is followed by the descension of the Spirit, and the descension of the Spirit is followed by the extension of the Gospel.

Author: Luke. As we consider the dedication of the book to Theophilus (Acts 1:1; compare Luke 1:3), the reference to a former treatise (Acts 1:1), its style, the fact that the author was a companion of Paul as shown by the fact that portions of the book are written in the first person (16:10), and that this companion accompanied Paul to Rome (27:1; compare Colossians 4:14; Philemon 24; II Timothy 4: 11), we conclude that the Acts was written by Luke. Ancient writers bear out this fact.

To Whom Written: It was written in particular to Theophilus, a Christian gentleman, but in general for the whole church.

Contents:

- I. The Church of Jerusalem. 1:1 to 8:4.
- II. The Transition Period. The church of Palestine and Syria. 8:5 to 12:23.
- III. The Church of the Gentiles. 12:24 to 21:17.
- IV. Closing Scenes in Paul's Life. 21:18 to 28:31.

I. The Church of Jerusalem. Chaps. 1 to 8:4

- 1. Introductory chapter. Chap. 1.
- 2. The outpouring of the Spirit. 2:1-13.
- 3. Peter's sermon and its results. 2:14-47.

4. The healing of the lame man, and Peter's sermon. 3:1-26.
5. Peter and John before the council. 4: 1-22.
6. The first prayer meeting. 4:23-31.
7. The consecration of the early church. 4: 32-37.
8. The sin of Ananias and Sapphira. 5:1-16.
9. The arrest of Peter and John. 5:17-42.
10. The first church difficulty and its settlement. 6:1-7.
11. The ministry of Stephen. 6:8-15.
12. Stephen's discourse before the council. Chap. 7.
13. The first persecution of the church. 8:1-4.

The book of Acts really begins at chapter 2, which chapter describes the outpouring of the Spirit and the empowerment of the Church. Chapter 1 is simply introductory and describes events leading up to the great event of the Day of Pentecost.

1. To what writing does the author refer in 1:1?
2. What does he say concerning Jesus in the same verse?
3. Which is mentioned first, “do” or “teach”?
4. When did Jesus give commands unto the apostles through the Spirit (v. 2; compare Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:14-20; Luke 24:44-53; John 20:19-23)?
5. Mention one of the “**infallible proofs**” (v. 3) of Christ's resurrection. Luke 24:39-43.
6. What command was then given (v. 4)?
7. When did the Father promise the Holy Spirit? Joel 2:28.
8. When did Jesus promise Him? John. 14:16-17; 15:26; 16:7-15.
9. Did Jesus mention the exact day on which the Spirit would be outpoured (v. 5)? Why not? (Compare Mark 13:37).
10. What question did the disciples ask at this time (v. 6)?
11. Had the kingdom been taken from Israel? Matthew 21:43.
12. Did Jesus answer this question directly?
13. Will the kingdom ever be restored to Israel? Romans 11:25-27.
14. When? Matthew 23:39; Luke 21:24; Romans 11:25; Acts 3:19-20; Zechariah 12:10.
15. What must take place before that event? Acts 1:8; 15:14; Romans 11:25.
16. Where was the ministry of the apostles to begin and end (I:8)?
17. In what city does the book of Acts begin?
18. In what city does it end?
19. What Old Testament scripture should be quoted with the last-named verse? Zechariah 4:6.
20. What happened after Jesus had given His commands to the apostles?
21. From what mountain did Jesus ascend (v. 12)?
22. On what mountain will He descend at His second coming? Zechariah 14:4.
23. What company is mentioned in verse 13?
24. Who is mentioned first? Why?
25. What other companies are mentioned in verse 14?
26. Was there a time when Jesus' brethren did not believe on Him? John 7:5.
27. Who was the spokesman of the apostles (v. 15)?
28. How many disciples were gathered at that time?
29. What Old Testament scriptures does Peter quote in relation to Judas? Psalm 69:25; 109:8.

Chapter 1:18 seems to contradict Matthew 27:5, but the logical inference from a comparison of the two verses is that Judas hanged himself and then fell to earth. A true incident is recorded of a man who committed suicide by sitting on the window sill in the fourth story of a house and then shooting himself. One writer might have described the whole event; another might have recorded only the shooting; another might have mentioned just the fact of his fall from the window. All three would have been right.

Why was Peter anxious that the complete number of the apostles should be made up? Matthew 19:28; Revelation 21:14. What two qualifications were necessary for an apostle (vv. 21,23)?

The two qualifications necessary for an apostle were: first, that he should have walked with the Lord during His earthly ministry; second, that he should have seen Him after His resurrection. The question has often been raised whether or not Matthias was divinely appointed as an apostle or whether Paul is the twelfth apostle. It is the writer's opinion that Matthias was the twelfth apostle. Though Paul was an apostle who had seen the Lord, and had been divinely appointed to his office, he did not possess the first qualification - that of having walked with the Lord during His earthly ministry. He did not bear that peculiar relation to Jesus that the Twelve did. (See John 15:27).

We now come to the events of the Day of Pentecost. The death and resurrection of Christ, and the outpouring of the Spirit represent the fulfilling of the types of three feasts which followed one another in succession; namely, Passover, (Leviticus 23:5), the Feast of the First-fruits (Leviticus 23:10-14), and the Feast of Pentecost (Leviticus 23:15-21).

The Passover was typical of Christ's atoning death. Following the Passover, was the Feast of the Firstfruits, on which feast the first-fruits of the harvest were waved before the Lord. This ceremony was typical of Christ's resurrection as "**the firstfruits**" from the dead. From this feast fifty days were counted, and on the last day the Feast of Pentecost was celebrated (hence the name "**Pentecost**," meaning fifty). On this feast two loaves - the first loaves of the wheat harvest - were waved before the Lord, this being typical of the consecration of the first members of the church.

Did the Holy Spirit inspire and empower people in Old Testament times? Numbers 11:26; I Samuel 10:6; Psalm 51:11; Micah 3:8.

Were people filled with the Spirit before Christ died? Luke 1:15,41, 67. Compare John 7:39.

What then was the difference between the imparting of the Spirit in those days and that in New Testament times? We will answer this question.

1. In Old Testament times the Spirit was given to only a few - to persons in some particular office, as prophet, priest or judge. Now He is poured out upon all flesh. Joel 2:28.
2. In those days the impartation of the Spirit was temporary; now He abides with us forever.

It is interesting to note that for every manifestation of the Spirit mentioned in the New Testament, a counterpart may be found in the Old, except for one - the speaking in other tongues. The inference drawn from this fact is that the speaking in other tongues is the manifestation of the Spirit that is intended to be peculiar to this dispensation.

What three manifestations accompanied the outpouring of the Spirit?

Was the speaking in other tongues for the purpose of preaching the Gospel to everyone in his own language (2:8-11, compare 10:46)?

In this instance languages were spoken, it was necessary to convince the unbelieving Jews that this was a genuine manifestation of the Spirit, and not mere gibberish, as some might have supposed.

What two effects did this manifestation produce on the hearers (vv. 12, 13)?

In what sense were the disciples drunk? Ephesians 5:18.

Note how Peter defended them against the charge of being drunk. The Jews did not generally eat or drink before the hour of prayer which came about 9 A. M.

1. How did Peter explain this manifestation (2:16-21)?
2. Did Joel's prophecy find its complete fulfillment at this time?
3. When will it be completely fulfilled in relation to Israel? Zechariah 12:10.
4. Who, in Old Testament times, prayed for this event? Numbers 11:29.
5. In his sermon, does Peter declare immediately that Jesus is the Messiah (v. 22, compare v. 36)?
6. What does he do first?
7. What first proof does he offer of Christ's Messiahship (v. 22)?
8. What second proof (v. 24)?
9. What third proof (v. 33)?
10. What was the effect of this sermon?
11. What did Peter tell the Jews to do (v. 38)?
12. What two things would follow their repentance (v. 38)?
13. What else did he tell them to do besides repenting (v. 40)?
14. What can you say concerning the unity of the first Christians (vv. 44-47)?
15. What was the outward manifestation of their unity (v. 45)?

Do you believe that they were commanded to have all things in common, or was this act spontaneous, born of Spirit-inspired love for the brethren? Are we, under the conditions in which we now live, to follow literally their example, or are we to manifest the same Spirit?

Chapter 3 records the first apostolic miracle.

Notice its characteristics. It was performed upon a man whose infirmity was incurable, and it was performed openly so it could be verified by all.

1. Were the actions of the healed man in the temple very dignified?
2. In New Testament times, when people wanted or received something from God the Lord, did they always consult their dignity? Luke 17:15; 19:3, 4.
3. From whom did Peter point the people (3:12)?
4. To whom did he point them (v. 13)?
5. What contrast does he draw between God's treatment of Christ and their treatment (vv. 13-15)?
6. As what kind of person did the Jews consider Jesus? Matthew 26:65; John 9:24.
7. What did Peter say had been done in His name (v. 16)?
8. What was the logical conclusion from this fact, as to Jesus' character? John 9:33.
9. Did the Jews have some excuse for their action in crucifying Christ (v. 17)?
10. Was this ignorance entirely excusable? John 12:37, 38.
11. Who was a type of the Jewish nation in this respect? I Timothy 1:13.
12. Was the Jewish nation rejected because they crucified Christ, the Son, or because they rejected the Spirit, who testified of His resurrection and exaltation? Compare Acts 13:46.
13. What appeal did Peter make to the nation (v. 19)?
14. What does he say will follow their repentance as a nation (vv. 19,20)?
15. Will they ever repent? Zechariah 12: 10; Matthew 23:39; Romans 11:26.
16. What is meant by "**the restitution of all things**" promised by the prophets? Isaiah Chap. 11; Jeremiah 23:5, 6; Amos 9:11-15; Zechariah 14:16-21.
17. Did the prophets ever predict the final restitution of the wicked and of the devil and his angels?
18. To which prophets does Peter refer them?
19. Why should they be the first to believe the prophets (v. 25)?
20. What privilege was Israel's (v. 26; compare Matthew 15:24; Acts 13:46; Romans 1:16; Romans 15:8)?

Chapter 4 records the first persecution of the apostles on the part of religious authorities.

1. What was the central theme of the apostles' preaching (v. 2)?
2. Why did this grieve the Sadducees? Matthew 22:23.
3. What was the result of Peter's last sermon (v. 4)?
4. What explains the boldness of an uneducated fisherman in the presence of the religious leaders (v. 8)?
5. Of what did Peter accuse them (v. 10)?
6. To what Old Testament scripture did he refer them (v. 11, compare Psalm 118:22)?
7. Where did Peter probably learn this scripture together with its meaning and application?
8. Matthew 21:42.
9. What warning did he utter to them (v. 12)?
10. Whose image did the priests see in Peter and John (v. 13)?
11. Why could they not take action against the apostles (v. 14)?
12. What admission did they make (v. 16)?
13. What should this admission have led them to do?
14. When did the same people make a similar admission? John 11:47.
15. Did their attempt to intimidate the apostles succeed (vv. 19, 20)?
16. What was the effect of this miracle on the people (v. 21)?
17. What did the opposition of the leaders lead the disciples to do (4:24)?

18. What psalm did they quote in their prayer (vv. 25, 26; see Psalm 2)?
19. What three petitions did they make (vv. 29, 30)?
20. How long was it before the answer came?
21. What three things happened (v. 31)?
22. What can you say concerning the consecration of the early church (4:32-37)?
23. Who is mentioned at this point as an example of a consecrated Christian (v. 36)?
24. Who wanted to have the same honor without paying the same price (5:1)?
25. What was probably at the bottom of their sin? I Timothy 6:10.
26. What sin did it lead to? Luke 12:1.
27. In what sin did it finally culminate?
28. What was the penalty of their sin?
29. Does God always punish similar offenders in this way, or did He punish these two as an example to others, and to show that the Church was a holy institution where no deceit would be tolerated?
30. What was the effect of this judgment on the Church (5:11)? On the people (v. 13)?
31. Would hypocrites care to join such a church?
32. What promise of the Lord found its fulfillment in 5:15, 16? John 14:12.
33. What effect did the ministry of Peter have on the Sadducees (5:17)?
34. How did they try to hinder the Word of life?
35. What did God have to say in the matter (5:20)?
36. What was making the Sadducees uneasy (v. 28)?
37. Was the blood of the Lord really upon them? John 11:47-53.
38. Did Peter tell them that Jesus' blood was upon them (vv. 30, 31)?
39. What two witnesses to Jesus' resurrection did Peter cite (v. 32)?
40. Who showed more wisdom than the other leaders (v. 34)?
41. Who was his distinguished pupil (22:3)?
42. Was his advice wise as far as natural wisdom was concerned?

In the above incident, Dr. Griffith-Thomas notices three representative forces

- The spirit of error (the Sadducees);
- The spirit of compromise (Gamaliel);
- The spirit of truth (Peter).

Acts 6 to 11

Chapter 6 records the first church difficulty and its solution.

Notice that this difficulty was unavoidable because the organization of the church had not increased in proportion to its growth (v. 1). Notice also that it was serious, for it threatened a division in the church between those Jews brought up in Palestine (Hebrews) and those who had received a Greek education, or who had lived in Greek-speaking countries (Grecians).

This difficulty was settled in the spirit of love and co-operation, and found its solution in increased organization - the instituting of a new order in the church ministry (deacons).

1. To what ministry did the apostles wish to limit themselves (6:4)?
2. What three qualifications for a deacon are mentioned here (v. 3)?

Note that though it is not recorded that these were called deacons, their ministry shows them to be such (deacon comes from a Greek word meaning *servant*).

3. Who was the most distinguished of all these deacons?
4. How did the Lord witness to His pleasure at the amiable settlement of the difficulty (v. 7)?
5. Is it necessary for one to be an apostle in order to work miracles (v. 8)?
6. With whom did Stephen dispute?
7. Why were they not able to resist his arguments and preaching (v. 10. Luke 21:15)?
8. Verbal arguments failing, to what did they resort (vv. 11-14)?
9. What was the charge against him? Did he look like a blasphemer (v. 15)?

In his defense, Stephen reviews Israel's history from Abraham to Solomon. Running through his discourse are the following thoughts:

1. Divine revelation is progressive. Stephen had been accused of preaching that the law of Moses would pass away (v. 14).

Though his words had been misquoted and their meaning perverted, Stephen had evidently been preaching the passing of the age of law, and the ushering in of the age of grace. So he shows that God has always been giving new revelations of Himself.

- First He revealed Himself to Abraham, through the institution of the altar;
- To Moses in the burning bush and on Mount Sinai;
- Then to Israel, through the tabernacle,
- And finally through the temple.

Stephen shows that God's dwelling in the tabernacle and temple was only symbolical (vv. 48,49). God now dwells in and reveals Himself in reality through a new institution - the Church.

2. He had been accused of declaring that the temple would be destroyed (6:14). He shows that the temple is not the only holy place, but that God reveals Himself anywhere He finds an open heart.

- He revealed Himself to Abraham in Mesopotamia (v. 2);
- To Joseph in Egypt (vv. 9-12);
- To Moses in Egypt (v. 25),
- And in the wilderness (vv. 30-33, 38).

3. Israel has always rejected God's first offer of mercy, suffered for it, and then has accepted it the second time. They rejected Joseph and Moses the first time, but accepted them the second time (vv. 9-13, 24-35). In like manner they have rejected Jesus but after they have suffered, they will accept His second offer.

1. With what two charges against the Jewish leaders did Stephen conclude his discourse (vs. 51, 52)?
2. What Old Testament Scriptures bear out these charges? Isaiah 63:10; II Chronicles 36:15,16; Nehemiah 9:30.
3. Did Jesus bring a similar accusation against them? Matthew 5:12; 23:34-39.
4. Who were the real breakers of the law (v. 53)?
5. What vision did Stephen behold (vv. 55, 56)?
6. What did he say?
7. Who had uttered similar words before the same council? Matthew 26:64.
8. What were Stephen's last two utterances (vv. 59, 60)?
9. Who spoke similar words on a like occasion? Luke 23:34, 46.
10. Who is mentioned at this point?
11. Was Stephen's prayer for his slayers answered in this young man? (Compare I Timothy 1:13).

Chapter 8:1-4 records the first general persecution against the whole church. Saul appears here as the most active agent in this persecution. Borne along by his characteristic zeal and energy, he became the champion of Judaism against what he believed to be the heresy of Christianity. What did Saul think he was doing in persecuting the Christians? John 16:2. What was his moral and religious character? Philippians 3:5, 6. In spite of his morality, zeal and sincerity, what was he while he was persecuting the Christians? I Timothy 1:13. Did God ever forgive him? Did Paul ever forgive himself? I Corinthians 15:9. Did this persecution hinder or advance the work of the Lord (8:4; 11:19-21)?

II. The Transition Period: the Church of Palestine and Syria. Chaps. 8:5 to 12:23

1. The Gospel in Samaria. 8:5-25.
2. The Ethiopian eunuch. 8:26-40.
3. The conversion of Saul. 9:1-22.
4. Saul's ministry in Jerusalem and flight to Tarsus. 9:23-31.
5. Peter's ministry in Lydda and Joppa. 9:32-43.
6. Cornelius' vision. 10:1-8.
7. Peter's vision. 10:9-18.
8. The first sermon to the Gentiles. 10:19-48.
9. Peter's defense for his preaching to the Gentiles. 11:1-18.
10. The establishment of the church at Antioch. 11:19-30.
11. Herod's persecution of the church. Chap. 12.

1. Who is the Philip mentioned in 8:5 (21:8)?
2. Who had first sown the seed in Samaria (John, Chap. 4)?
3. What did Philip preach (v. 5)?
4. With whom does he stand in contrast in this respect (v. 9)?
5. What accompanied Philip's preaching (vv. 6, 7)?
6. What was the general effect of this great revival (v. 8)?
7. Was Simon really converted? (Compare vv. 21-23).
8. What kind of faith was his? (Compare John 2:23, 24).

9. What motive evidently was at the root of his following Philip (vv. 18, 19)?
10. Had Simon seen manifestations of the Spirit's power (vv. 6,7)?
11. Had he seen joy (v. 8)?
12. What was there in the Baptism of the Spirit that impressed him (vv. 18,19)?
13. Did Simon manifest true repentance (v. 24)?
14. Was he really sorry for his sin, or was he afraid of what might happen to him?
15. Where was Philip told to go (8:26)?
16. Why was it necessary that he leave the scene of a great revival to go to a desert?
17. Was anyone else willing to go out of his way to speak to one soul? John, Chap. 4.
18. By whom was Philip led (v. 29)?
19. What very important question did he put to the eunuch (v. 31)?
20. Of what did the man feel the need?
21. How has Jesus supplied this need? John 16:13; Luke 24:45.
22. What passage of Scripture was the eunuch reading?
23. What could he not understand (v. 34)?
24. On what condition did Philip baptize the eunuch (v. 37)?
25. What mode of rapid transportation was used here (v. 39)?
26. Of what is that typical? I Thessalonians 4:17.
27. Had Saul's hatred for the Christians abated (9:1-4)?
28. To what city was he about to extend his activities?
29. Where was he when he saw the Lord?
30. Whom did Jesus say that Saul was persecuting?
31. What does this teach concerning the believers' relation to the Lord? Matthew 10:40.

“It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks (or goads).” In the East, when an animal became refractory, the driver would prod it with an iron-pointed rod. The animal's movements then would increase the pain. Jesus wished to teach Paul that he was fighting against God, and that in so doing he was but hurting himself.

32. How long was it before Saul repented (v. 6)?
33. How did he address Jesus?
34. Did Saul really see the Lord? I Corinthians 9:1.
35. What could he always claim? Galatians 1:1.
36. Who was now commissioned to minister to Saul?
37. Was the Lord very specific in giving directions (v. 11)?
38. What was Saul's occupation during the three days of his blindness (v. 11)?
39. To what three classes was Saul to preach (v. 15)?
40. What was Jesus to reveal to Saul (v. 16)?
41. What side of the ministry did Jesus always show first to prospective disciples? Luke 14:25-33.
42. Does He show the other side? Matthew 19:28, 29.
43. How did Ananias address Saul (v. 17)?
44. What did Saul receive at this time? What did Paul immediately do (v. 19)?
45. What happened between verses 22 and 23? Galatians 1:15-17.
46. What was the attitude of the disciples to Paul when he came to Jerusalem (v. 26)?
47. Who befriended him at this time?

48. In what danger was Paul (v. 29)?
49. What vision did he have at this time (22:17, 18)?
50. Where was Paul sent (v. 30)?
51. How long did he stay there (11:25)? About 8 years.
52. What was the effect on the church of the removal of its great persecutor (v. 31)?
53. What was Peter's destination on this journey (9:32,43)?
54. What events happened during this time?
55. What actions of Peter in raising Tabitha resemble those of the Lord when He raised the ruler's daughter (vv. 40-42; compare Mark 5:40, 41)?
56. What was the effect of Peter's miracles in Lydda and Joppa?
57. What was the main purpose of Peter's visit at Joppa (10:6)?
58. What three things are said concerning Cornelius' character (10:2)?
59. What was his position?
60. To whom did Jesus prophesy the salvation of the Gentiles? Matthew 8:5-13.
61. Was Cornelius a saved man (11:14)?
62. But what in the condition of his heart made it sure that God would reveal Christ unto him (vv. 2,35)?
63. Had Cornelius been praying along this line (10:31)?
64. What was he doing when he saw a vision (v. 3)?
65. Where does God usually meet men? Daniel 9:3,21; Acts 22:17, 18.
66. At what hour was Cornelius praying (Compare 3:1)?
67. Why did not the angels preach the Gospel to Cornelius instead of telling him where to find a preacher (vv. 5,6; 2 Corinthians 5:18)?
68. Did angels ever preach the Gospel? Luke 2:10, 11.

Notice the meaning of Peter's vision. He was told by a voice from heaven to do something that was contrary to the Mosaic law (vv. 12-14). This was symbolical that the dispensation of law was to pass away. The fact that the command was repeated signifies that God's purpose was established. (Compare Genesis 41:32). The fact that the sheet was taken up into heaven signifies that the purpose symbolized by the sheet and animals was divine.

69. Did Peter understand at the time the meaning of the vision (v. 17)?
70. When did he understand (v. 22)?
71. Whom did Peter take with him (v. 23)? Why (vv. 45,46; 11:12)?
72. What verse condemns saint worship of the Roman church (v. 25)?
73. What did Peter say was the attitude of Jews toward Gentiles (v. 28)?
74. Did the Old Testament prophesy the salvation of the Gentiles? Psalm 22:27; Isaiah 49: 6; Hosea 2:23.
75. Did Jesus prophesy their salvation? Matthew 8:11; 21:23; John 10:16.
76. Did the Old Testament ever teach that the Jew and the Gentile would belong to the same body? Ephesians 3:3-6.
77. What had Peter learned (vv. 34,35)?
78. What does verse 38 say concerning Jesus?
79. When was He anointed? Matthew 3:16.
80. For what purpose? Compare Luke 4:18.
81. How did Peter know that (v. 39)?

82. What happened as Peter was speaking?
83. What was the effect on the Jews who were with Peter?
84. What proved conclusively to these prejudiced Jews that the Gentiles had received the Spirit?
85. How were these Gentiles saved (15:9; compare Romans 10:17)?
86. What shows the prejudice of the Jews against the Gentiles (11:2, 3)?
87. How did Peter defend himself?
88. How did he show that God put no difference between Jew and Gentile (v. 15)?
89. What were the Jews compelled to admit (v. 18)?
90. How far did those who had been scattered by Paul's persecution travel (11:19)?
91. To whom did they limit their ministry (v. 20)?
92. To whom did some of them preach? (Note that the word "Grecians" is the same as the "Greeks"; i.e., Gentiles).
93. What was the spiritual condition of the church at Antioch (v. 23)?
94. Who was sent to preach to them?
95. What three things are said concerning him?
96. Where did he go for help (v. 25)?
97. How long did they remain at Antioch?
98. What characterized the disciples at that time (11:26)?
99. What gift of the Spirit was exercised at this time (v. 28)?
100. What shows the liberality of the church at Antioch (v. 29)?

The Herod mentioned in 12:1 is Herod Agrippa I, the grandson of Herod the Great. Matthew 2:1.

101. Had James' martyrdom been indirectly prophesied? Matthew 20:22, 23.
102. Why did Herod have Peter arrested?
103. To what did the church have recourse (v. 5)?
104. What happened the last time the church prayed during a crisis (4:31)?
105. What happened this time?
106. Does it look as if those praying really expected an answer to their prayers (v. 15)?
107. What may have been their condition? Luke 24:44.
108. What was God's judgment on Herod?

Acts 12 to 15

III. The Church of the Gentiles - Chaps. 12:24 to 21:17

1. Paul's first missionary journey. 12:24 to 14:28.
2. The council at Jerusalem. Chap. 15:1-35.
3. Paul's second missionary journey. 15:36 to 18:22.
4. Paul's third missionary journey. 18:23 to 21:17.

NOTE: In the sections dealing with Paul's journeys, the use of a map is almost a necessity. Let the student so study each journey that he will be able to trace from memory Paul's itinerary, mentioning briefly what occurred at each place.

1. Whom did Paul and Barnabas bring from Jerusalem at this time? 12:25.

2. What relation was he to Barnabas? Colossians 4:10.
3. What church sent forth Paul and Barnabas?
4. How was this church started (11:19)?
5. Who called these two to their ministry?
6. Is it said that Mark was called also?
7. What may this explain (13:13)?
8. Where does Paul stand in the list of workers at Antioch (13:1)?

Let us now trace together Barnabas' and Paul's journey step by step. If possible, have a map before you.

Antioch. This was the missionary headquarters of the Church.

Seleucia. This was the seaport of Antioch. Cyprus. An island in the Mediterranean Sea. The early home of Barnabas (4:36).

Salamis. What did the missionaries do in this town. (13:5)?

Paphos.

1. Who was the first person the missionaries met at this town?
2. What did he attempt to do (13:8)? What struggle is exemplified here? 1 John 4:6; compare II Timothy 3:8.
3. Timothy 3:8.
4. By what power did Paul pronounce judgment upon the sorcerer (13:9)?
5. What was the effect of this judgment (v. 12)?
6. What change of name occurs at this point (v. 9)?

Perga.

1. Who has been leader up to this point (13:1; 12:25)?
2. Who assumes the leadership now (13:13)?
3. What happened at this town? How can we explain Mark's action? (Compare 13:2).
4. Did Mark ever "make good"? II Timothy 4:11.

Antioch in Pisidia

The service of the Jewish synagogue consisted usually of prescribed prayers and the reading of the Law and the Prophets. If a preacher or teacher were present, he was called upon to give a message. (Compare Luke 4:16-21). Paul began his message with a review of Israel's history up to the time of David (vv. 17-25). He then showed that Jesus was of the seed of David (vv. 25-33). He based Jesus' claims as Son of God and Messiah on His resurrection from the dead (vv. 26-37). He then offered the Gospel to the Jews and warned them against rejecting it (vv. 38-41).

1. Who were particularly anxious to hear the Gospel (v. 42)?
2. How great a hunger for the Word of God was there (v. 44)?
3. What were the feelings of the Jews on seeing the Word of God preached to Gentiles (v. 45)?

4. Of what prophecy was this attitude a fulfillment? Deuteronomy 32:21.
5. What was their attitude toward the Gospel (v. 45)?
6. What did Paul and Barnabas say was necessary (v. 46)? Why? Matthew 10:6; 15:24; John 4:22; Romans 1:16; 15:8.
7. What did he say that their rejection of the Gospel would mean to the Gentiles (v. 46; compare Romans 11:11)?
8. Though persecuted by them, what were always Paul's feelings toward his people? Romans 9:1-3; 10:1.
9. How did the Gentiles receive the Gospel (v. 48)?
10. Arguments failing, what did the Jews then do? What did Paul and Barnabas do (51)?
11. Was there any command to this effect? Matthew 10:14.

Iconium

1. What shows that Paul had not yet forsaken his people (14:1)?
2. What were the two results of his preaching in this town (vv. 2,3)?
3. How did the Lord confirm their preaching (v. 3)?
4. What did their ministry cause in the city (v. 4)?
5. What did they do when they heard of coming persecution (v. 6)?
6. Had they any command to this effect? Matthew 10:23.

Lystra

1. Who was healed through Paul's ministry at this town?
2. Through what other apostles was an impotent man healed (3:1-6)?
3. What did the people wish to do to Paul and Barnabas (14:13)?
4. Which apostle had a somewhat similar experience (10:25,26)?
5. What talent of Paul is noted here (v. 12)?
6. How lasting was their popularity (v. 19)?

Derbe

1. What did Paul do in this town (14:21)? Lystra, Iconium and Antioch.
2. What exhortation did Paul give to the disciples in these towns (v. 22)?
3. What did he tell them to expect (v. 22)?
4. What did he do before he left (v. 23)?

Pisidia This is the province where Antioch was located.

Perga

1. What had happened here before (13:13)?
2. What work was done in this town (14:25)?

Attalia - A seaport.

Antioch

Here the apostles reported their work. Be able to name from memory the different places visited by Paul on his first journey, mentioning briefly what occurred at each place.

Chapter 15 records the convening of the first Christian council, called to settle a very important problem; namely, the relation of the Gentiles to the Jews and the grounds on which the former were to be saved. The two questions to be settled were:

Are the Gentiles to keep the Law of Moses in order to be saved? And, are the Gentiles to have religious equality with the Jews?

“It must be remembered that the separation between Jew and Gentile was both religious and social. The Jews had a divine law which sanctioned the principle, and enforced the practice of national isolation. They could not easily believe that this law, with which all the glorious passages of their history was connected, was meant to endure only for a limited period; and we cannot but sympathize with the difficulty they felt in accepting the notion of a cordial union with the uncircumcised, even after idolatry was abandoned and morality observed. And again, the peculiar character of the religion which isolated the Jews was such as to place insuperable obstacles in the way of social union with other men.

Their ceremonial observances precluded the possibility of their eating with the Gentiles.

The nearest parallel we can find to this barrier between the Jew and Gentile is the institution of the caste among the populations of India, which presents itself to our politicians as a perplexing fact in the government of the presidencies, and to our missionaries as the great obstacle to Christianity in the East.

A Hindoo cannot eat with a Parsee, or a Mohammedan - and among the Hindus themselves the meals of a Brahmin are polluted by the presence of a Pariah, - though they meet and have free intercourse in the ordinary transaction of business. So it was in the patriarchal age.

It was an abomination for the Egyptians to eat bread with the Hebrews. Genesis 43:32. The same principle was divinely sanctioned for a time in the Mosaic institutions. The Israelites who lived among the Gentiles, met them freely in their places of public resort, buying and selling, conversing and disputing; but their families were separated.

In the relations of domestic life, it was “**unlawful,**” as Peter said to Cornelius, “**for a man that was a Jew to keep company or come unto one of another nation.**”

When Peter returned from the centurion at Caesarea to his brother Christians at Jerusalem, their great charge against him was that he had gone unto men uncircumcised and had eaten with them; and the weak compliance of which he was guilty, after the true principle of social unity had been publicly recognized, and which called forth the rebuke of his brother apostle, was that, after eating with the Gentiles, he “**withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.**” Galatians 2:11, 12.

“How these two difficulties, which seemed to forbid the formation of a united church, were ever to be overcome - how the Gentiles were to be religiously united without the enforced obligation of the whole Mosaic Law, - how they were to be socially united as equal brethren in the family of a common Father, - the solution in that day must have seemed impossible. And without the direct intervention of divine grace it would have been impossible.” - Conybeare and Howson.

The question was made an issue by a certain party of Jewish believers, who, though acknowledging that God had granted eternal life unto the Gentiles, insisted that the observance of the Law of Moses was obligatory in their case, and that it was necessary to their salvation.

The members of this party later became Paul's bitterest enemies, and at different periods of his ministry did all in their power to undermine his authority. Galatians 2:4. It was this class of men that caused the church of the Galatians to go back to the observance of the Mosaic law. Galatians 5:1-7. It should be remembered that these men, known as the Judaizers had the authority of Old Testament Scriptures to support their assertions. (The New Testament was not yet written).

The Old Testament predicted the salvation of the Gentiles (Psalm 22:7; 86:9; Isaiah 49:6) but the Old Testament taught that the submitting to the rite of circumcision, and the observance of other Mosaic ceremonies was necessary for union with God's people. Genesis 17:14. So then there comes before us another aspect of the problem; namely, as to how the liberty of the Gospel and the authority of the Scriptures were to be preserved. This and the other problems find their solution in the speeches made by those present at the council. Note Peter's discourse (15:7-11).

Peter's main argument is that the impartation of the Holy Ghost was the true test of God's acceptance of the Gentiles.

The fact that the last-named received the gift of the Spirit as well as the Jews proves that God does not place any difference between Jewish and Gentile believers (v. 8). The fact that the Gentiles received the Spirit before submitting to any external ceremony shows that no outward observance of the Mosaic law was necessary to salvation.

Though under the old covenant, circumcision was required as a condition for belonging to the chosen people, God's action in saving and baptizing the Gentiles without the observance of such a rite indicated that He had made a new covenant, and that the old was passing away. Jeremiah 31:31. It was by faith, not by the works of the law, that the Gentiles were justified (v. 9).

God had delivered all believers from the heavy yoke of the Law; therefore to impose that burden on the Gentiles was tempting God (v. 10). The Jewish believers themselves were not saved by the law, but by grace (v. 11).

Paul and Barnabas contented themselves with telling what God had wrought among the Gentiles (v. 12). The fact that God was saving Gentiles, filling them with the Spirit and working miracles among them apart from any attempt on their part to keep the law, would prove that the latter was unnecessary to their salvation.

Peter had declared the equality of Jew and Gentile. But, the Pharisees might object, “How is this fact to be reconciled with the Scriptures that teach the supremacy of the Jews over the Gentiles?” Isaiah 61:5,6; Zechariah 14:18.

James anticipates this objection and answers it by outlining the divine program for the age.

He first of all explains that not all the Gentiles will be saved during this age, but only certain individuals to make up, together with the Jewish elect, the Church (v. 14). Then will follow the restoration of Israel as a nation, and their consequent exaltation over nations (v. 16). After this, all the nations will turn to the Lord (v. 17).

Notice the decision of the council (vv. 19-29).

The Gentiles were not required to be circumcised or keep the law of Moses. However, certain prohibitions were laid upon the Gentiles: they were to abstain from idolatry and fornication, and they were not to eat animals strangled, or the blood of those animals. Leviticus 7:22-27. The first two prohibitions were dictated by the moral law; the other two, by the ceremonial.

The sins of fornication and idolatry are mentioned because they are the two sins which would prove a special temptation to those saved from among the heathen. The last two prohibitions represented a concession to Jewish beliefs.

However, there was no compromise in any fundamental matter. “The most shameless violations of purity took place in connection with the sacrifices and feasts celebrated in honor of the heathen divinities. Everything, therefore, which tended to keep the Gentile converts even from accidental or apparent association with those scenes of vice, made their recovery from pollution more easy, and enabled the Jewish converts to look on their new Christian brethren with less suspicion and antipathy. This seems to be the reason why we find an acknowledged sin mentioned in the decree along with ceremonial observances which were meant to be only temporary and perhaps local.

We must look on the whole subject from the Jewish point of view, and consider how violations of morality and contradictions of the ceremonial law were associated together in the Gentile world. It is hardly necessary to remark that much additional emphasis is given to the moral part of the decree, when we remember that it was addressed to those who lived in proximity to the profligate sanctuaries of Antioch and Paphos.” - Conybeare and Howson.

Notice the outcome of the council: it resulted in a victory for Paul’s party and a recognition of his call and ministry. Galatians 2:9.

We shall conclude this subject by giving the four phases of that great truth - the union of Jew and Gentile in one body:

1. This truth was, in past ages, a mystery. Ephesians 3:5, 6. The Old Testament taught the salvation of the Gentiles, but not their forming together with the Jews, one body.
2. It became a revelation. Acts 10:11-18,34, 35; 15:7-9.

3. It became a problem. Acts 15.
4. It afterwards became a reality. Galatians 3:28.

Acts 15:36 to 21:17

1. What unfortunate occurrence marked the beginning of the second missionary journey (15:36-39)?
2. Did this hinder God's work at all?
3. Was Barnabas or Mark ever mentioned again in the book of Acts?
4. Who received the endorsement of the brethren (15:40)?

Let us now trace Paul's second journey (15:36 to 18:22). Following Dr. Hurlbut's arrangement we shall divide the journey into three sections:

- The stations in Asia,
- The stations in Europe,
- The stations of the return.

Syria and Cilicia. In these two provinces Paul visited the churches that had already been established there.

Derbe. What happened the last time they were in this city (14:21)?

Lystra. Whom did Paul meet here? What was his nationality? What is said concerning his character?

Phrygia, Galatia, and Mysia. What limitation was placed upon Paul's ministry in these provinces? Why (16:9)?

Troas. What call did Paul receive here?

Philippi. Notice the humble beginning of the church in Europe - at a small prayer meeting. Then notice the first conflict of the apostles with heathendom (vv. 19-40).

Here we find first mention of the fact of Paul's Roman citizenship (v. 37). This citizenship served him to good purpose later in his ministry.

Those entitled to the privilege of Roman citizenship were:

- Those born in Rome (except slaves);
- Those born in a Roman colony, i.e., a town to which was extended the rights of Roman citizenship (Philippi was such a town);
- Those whose fathers were citizens (Paul may have obtained his citizenship this way);
- Those who purchased their citizenship. Acts 22:28.

The following were the privileges of a Roman citizen:

- He could always claim protection by uttering the phrase, "I am a Roman citizen;"
- He could not be condemned without a trial;
- He could not be scourged;
- He could not be crucified;
- He could appeal from the common courts to the emperor.

Amphipolis, Apollonia. Paul did not stay very long in either of these towns.

Thessalonica. To whom did Paul preach first in this town? What was his message to them (17:3)? What two effects followed his preaching (vv. 4,5)?

Berea. To whom did Paul preach first? What was the character of these Jews? What two effects followed the preaching of the Word (vv. 12, 13)? Who remained in Berea while Paul left for Athens?

Athens. Notice Paul's encounter with members of two schools of philosophy - the Epicureans and the Stoics.

(Philosophy is that branch of knowledge which has for its object the discovery of the truth concerning God, man, and the universe, as far as those truths can be ascertained by the human reason).

The Epicureans were skeptics who rejected all religion.

- They believed that the world rose from chance,
- That the soul is mortal,
- That pleasure is the ultimate end of life.

The Stoics were pantheists; i.e., they believed that everything is part of God.

- They believed that virtue is the chief end of life, and should be practiced for its sake alone.

Notice Paul's message. He shows God's relation to the universe (vv. 24,25) and to man (vv. 26-29). He then declares God's moral government of the world, this government to be perfectly manifest at the last judgment (v. 31).

What were the two effects of the preaching (vv. 32-34)?

Corinth.

1. Whom did Paul meet at this city?
2. Who joined Paul here?
3. What was the effect of his preaching to the Jews?
4. What encouragement did Paul have to remain in spite of opposition (18:9)?

5. How long did Paul remain at Corinth?
6. Who protected Paul at this time (v. 12)?

It was from Corinth that Paul wrote his two epistles to the Thessalonians. These were written for the purpose of:

- Confirming the young converts,
- Comforting them in the face of persecution,
- Exhorting them to holiness,
- Comforting them concerning their dead.

Cenchrea. This was a seaport near Corinth from which Paul sailed. Had a church been established here? Romans 16:1.

Ephesus.

1. Whom did Paul leave here (18:19)?
2. What ministry did Priscilla and Aquila have there later (18:26)?
3. Why was he in a hurry to return to Jerusalem (v. 21)?
4. What did he promise to do before he left (v. 21)?

Caesarea. This was the Roman capital of Palestine, and a harbor.

Jerusalem. Paul stopped here to salute the church (18:22).

Antioch. Here he reported the results of his missionary journey.

We shall now trace Paul's third missionary Journey.

Antioch. The starting point of all Paul's missionary Journeys.

Galatia and Phrygia. Paul traveled through these provinces confirming and encouraging the believers of the churches he had established there.

Ephesus. Notice the preparation for Paul's three years' ministry in this town (18:24). Apollos, a cultured Alexandrian Jew, had been preaching John the Baptist's message, thus paving the way for Paul's fuller revelation of Christ and His salvation.

1. What was Paul's earnest desire for all believers (19:2)?
2. What did he later write to the believers of this city? Ephesians 5:18.
3. Were these men really saved before receiving the Spirit (19:5; compare 8:36,37)?
4. What happened after they were saved (v. 6)?
5. How long did Paul preach in the synagogue?
6. What did he do when opposition arose?
7. How long did he continue preaching in the school of Tyrannus (v. 10)?
8. How far did the Word of God spread from Ephesus (v. 10)?

Notice that special miracles were wrought by Paul at Ephesus. This was granted Paul, because Ephesus was the headquarters of idolatry in Asia, It was a stronghold of the powers of darkness. Because of this God gave additional power to His servant to triumph over Satan.

Some professional exorcists (those who made a business of casting out demons) attempted to use that name through which Paul had performed miracles. They suffered severely for their rashness. Their punishment taught the Ephesians that the name of Jesus was a powerful name, a sacred name which could not be taken in vain (19:17). Many believers were affected by this incident and confessed some of their sins, especially the sin of dabbling in the occult sciences (vv. 18,19).

Then followed a great revival (v. 20). Notice that Paul's missionary vision is widening; he must preach at Rome (v. 21). Verses 23 to 41 record an incident which testifies in a concrete way of Paul's success in Ephesus. He had struck such a blow at this great fortress of Satan that the worship of Diana was waning. This alarmed the makers of idols who raised an uproar against Paul.

During his stay at Ephesus, Paul wrote the first epistle to the Corinthians. After Paul's departure, serious disorders broke out in the Corinthian church.

- The church was divided;
- Immorality was tolerated.
- Brother was suing brother at law.
- The Lord's Supper had been degraded to the level of a common meal, where drunkenness was common.

To correct these abuses, and to answer some questions they had asked concerning marriage, meat and the gifts of the Spirit, Paul wrote them a letter.

Macedonia (20:2). It is probable that Paul visited Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea at this time. It was here that Paul wrote his second letter to the Corinthians. It was written to encourage the great body of the church which had repented on receiving his first letter, and to warn a small party that persisted in despising his commands.

Greece (20:2). Paul's chief mission in this country was to visit the church of Corinth to correct abuses, and to deal with a rebellious minority that refused to acknowledge his authority. While at Corinth he wrote the epistles to the Galatians and the Romans. The former was written to restore the church of the Galatians which, influenced by legalistic preachers, had begun to observe the law of Moses as a means of salvation and sanctification.

The second was written to give the Roman church a statement of the great truths which Paul preached and to make known his intention of visiting them.

Philippi. Leaving Greece, Paul set out for Jerusalem (19:21). Paul's party went ahead of him to Troas (20:4, 5).

Troas. How long did Paul remain here? On what day was it customary for the church to gather for its weekly services (20:7)? Is there any other scripture that bears this out? I Corinthians 16:1, 2. What incident occurred here?

Assos. While the rest of the party sailed from Troas, Paul went on foot to this town, where he was picked up by the ship.

Mitylene, Chios, Samos. Small islands where Paul's ship touched.

Trogyllium. A town on the coast of Asia Minor Miletus. While the ship was delayed here, Paul called the elders of the Ephesian church and gave them a farewell address. In verses 17 to 21 Paul reviews his ministry among them.

1. How had he served the Lord (v. 19)?
2. How thorough was his ministry (v. 20)?
3. What was his message (v. 21)?
4. What was facing him (vv. 22,23)?
5. What were his feelings in the face of this (v. 24)?
6. Had Paul fulfilled his responsibility among them (v. 26)? How (v. 27, compare Ezekiel 33:1-9)?
7. What admonition does he give to the elders (v. 28)?
8. In view of what coming dangers (v. 29)?
9. Had Paul merely preached the Gospel among them (v. 35)?

Coos, Rhodes. Two small islands off the coast of Asia Minor.

Patara. Here the apostle changed ships.

Tyre. What message did Paul receive here? 21:4.

Ptolemais. How long did Paul remain here?

Cæsarea. Here Paul's coming persecutions in Jerusalem were prophesied. Before answering in the negative the question as to whether Paul was in the Lord's will in going to Jerusalem, the following fact should be noted: Paul was ever obedient to the Lord's leading (16:6-10); his words in 21:13 are those of a person who feels he is then in God's will; others saw in Paul's attitude God's will (21:14); it was not natural for a man like Paul to expose himself needlessly to danger; the things that he suffered in Jerusalem were not necessarily a sign that he was out of God's will (Acts 9:16; 23:11); it was the Lord's will that Paul appear before Nero (27:24).

It may be possible that the disciples of Tyre (21:4) predicted through the Spirit Paul's coming persecution, and then added their own advice.

Jerusalem. As soon as Paul arrived in this city, the church council gathered to hear Paul's report.

Acts 21-28

IV. The Closing Scenes of Paul's life. 21:18 to 28:31

1. Paul and the Jewish Christians. 21:18-26
2. Paul and the non-Christian Jews. 21:27-31
3. Paul's arrest. 21:32-40
4. Paul's defense before the Jews and the result. 22:1-30
5. Paul before the Jewish council. 23:1-10
6. His removal to Caesarea. 23:11-35
7. Paul before Felix. Chap. 24
8. Paul before Festus. Chap. 25
9. Paul before Agrippa. Chap. 26
10. Paul's journey to Rome. Chaps. 27, 28

Paul was well received by the church at Jerusalem (21:17, 18), but they felt anxious for his safety, for the rumor had spread that Paul was preaching against the law of Moses and that he was persuading the Jews to forsake it.

Because of this rumor (which was false) the Jews of Jerusalem felt towards Paul as we would feel towards an anarchist - one opposed to law and order. In order to disarm the Jews' hostility, and to prove the falsity of the rumor, Paul consented to the observance of a Jewish ceremony.

In doing this, he did not compromise in any fundamental matter, but acted upon the following principles laid down by himself in his writings: he became a Jew to the Jews that he might win the Jews, as willingly as he became as a Gentile in order to win the Gentiles (I Corinthians 9:20, 21); he had given it as a rule that no man should change his external observances because he became a Christian. I Corinthians 7:17-19.

Paul's action in regard to testimony to Timothy (16:3) proved the falsity of the accusation that he was persuading the Jews to forsake the law of Moses.

In advising Paul to perform a ceremony of the Jewish ritual, James assured him that no compromise in the matter of the grounds of Gentile salvation was implied (v. 25).

Paul's action did not save him from the enmity of the non-Christian Jews (vv. 27-31). Certain ones who had heard him preach in Asia Minor (v. 27), recognized him and immediately stirred up the population against him. But for the intervention of the Roman soldiers Paul would have been killed.

Notice Paul's defense (22:1-21).

He assured them that his present beliefs and life could not be the result of an original difference between himself and his hearers, for he was a true Jew (v. 3), taught by the greatest Jewish teacher of the day (v. 3), and he was just as zealous for the law, and opposed to the Christians as they were (vv. 4, 5).

Paul then showed what caused his change of belief, and his attitude toward the Christians; namely, a vision of the Lord Himself (vv. 6-16). The reason why he was preaching to the despised Gentiles was that the Lord Himself had sent him (vv. 17-21). Notice what happened at the mention of the Gentiles (v. 22).

Notice how Paul's Roman citizenship protected him at this time (22:25). The words "**I am a Roman citizen,**" uttered in any part of the empire were sufficient to bring protection to the one speaking them.

Paul was then brought before the Jewish council, and there he declared his innocence (23:1). The unjust and cruel action of the high priest in commanding him to be smitten, caused him to break forth into a severe denunciation against him. In the heat of his indignation he forgot the high priest and saw only a tyrannical ruler. Though he could not honor the man, he honored the office he occupied (v. 5).

It is interesting to note that Paul's denunciation of the high priest was prophetic, for some twelve years later, the latter died a violent death.

Seeing that the council was prejudiced against him, and there was no hope of justice and mercy from them, Paul resorted to a stratagem. He knew that the Pharisees and Sadducees were divided on the doctrine of the resurrection. Therefore he appealed to the Pharisaic section of the council, and appealed for their clemency on the ground that he was on trial because of the preaching of a doctrine which they themselves accepted. This appeal divided the council, and led to Paul's escape and his protection by the Romans. Later, the discovery of a plot to assassinate Paul led to his being escorted to Caesarea by a company of Roman soldiers. At this town he appeared before the governor, Felix.

We shall notice here the accusations brought against Paul and his answers to them (24:1-21). In this discourse and the one made before Agrippa we shall follow the analysis given by Dr. Stifler.

The accusation was three-fold (vv. 5, 6);

- Sedition, "**a mover of sedition among the Jews**";
- Heresy, "**a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes**";
- Sacrilege, "**who also hath gone about to profane the temple.**"

He disproved the accusation of sedition by showing the time was too short (v. 11), that his conduct disproved it (v. 12), and that there was no proof of it (v. 13).

In answer to the charge of heresy, he affirmed his belief in the Jewish scriptures (v. 14), and professed to having the same hope as the Jews themselves (vv. 15, 16).

That he had not committed sacrilege was evident, for he had brought alms and offerings to his nation (v. 17), he was found in the temple purified (v. 18), and there were no witnesses present to prove the charge (v. 19).

Notice Felix's attitude toward Paul in public (vv. 22,23), in private (v. 25), and the outcome of the trial (v. 27).

Paul was then brought before Festus, the new governor (25:1). Seeing that Festus was friendly toward the Jews (25:9), he availed himself of his right as a Roman citizen to appeal to the emperor (v. 11). This took the case completely out of the hands of Festus.

Notice Paul's defense before Agrippa (Chap. 26). It is an argument to justify his belief and preaching of the resurrection. This belief, Paul affirms is no crime, for Paul has always been a Pharisee whose prime article of faith has been the same hope (vv. 4-6). His accusers believe this same doctrine and are inconsistent in attacking him (v. 7).

Paul did not come of himself to the preaching of the Gospel, for he was formerly opposed to it (vv. 8-12). It was a revelation of Jesus that brought him into the ministry (vv. 13-18). It was an obedience to this divine revelation that was the only cause of the Jewish opposition (vv. 19-22). His teaching concerning Christ's death and resurrection agrees with the teaching of Moses and the prophets (vv. 22, 23).

What was the effect of this discourse on Felix?
On Agrippa?

We shall now trace Paul's journey to Rome (Chaps. 27,28)

Caesarea. From this port, where he had been a prisoner two years, Paul sailed to Rome. As companions he had Aristarchus (27:2) and Luke (indicated by the use of the pronoun "we").

Sidon. Here Paul was allowed to visit his friends.

Myra. A city on the south coast of Asia Minor, where Paul changed ships.

Cnidus. A port on the coast of Asia Minor. The vessel was unable to enter because of contrary winds.

Crete. An island south of Greece.

Fair Havens. Here the ship remained for some time. Paul's advice was that they should remain in this harbor during the winter, and so escape a danger which he foresaw. The master of the ship did not accept this advice, but attempted to reach the port of Phoenice. Their attempt was thwarted by a storm which arose. Paul's prediction was fulfilled. For fourteen days and nights they were driven about until they came to the Island of Melita.

Melita. How long did Paul remain in this island (28:11)?

Syracuse. A town on the eastern shore of the island of Sicily. The ship remained here three days.

Rhegium. A town at the extreme end of the Italian mainland.

Puteoli. One of the leading ports of Italy. Here Paul found some brethren.

Appii Forum, the “*Three Taverns.*” Two villages where the Roman brethren came to meet Paul.

Rome. The first thing that Paul did after arriving at Rome was to call the Jewish leaders in order that he might clear himself from the charge against him, and to obtain a friendly hearing. It was his last recorded attempt to win the Jews. Notice the result of his preaching to them (28:24-28; compare Matthew 13:13-15; John 12:40; Matthew 21:43).

Dr. Griffith-Thomas notices God’s providence in Paul’s imprisonment in the following way:

1. He was safe from all the Jews.
2. He became conspicuous to all. Philippians 1:12, 13
3. He had an opportunity of witnessing to the soldiers who guarded him.
4. He was visited by friends from various churches. (Philippians 2:25;4:10).
5. He was able to write some of his choicest epistles: Philippians, Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians.

From tradition and some references, it has been concluded that Paul was released for about a period of two years (see Philippians 1:24-26; 2:24; Philemon 24: II Timothy 4:17), and then was rearrested and finally executed during the persecution of the Christians by Nero. During this period of liberty it is believed that he wrote the epistles to Timothy and to Titus.

Because of its importance we have covered the book of Acts somewhat more thoroughly than the preceding books. We shall now ask the student to learn the following chapter outline in order to impress upon his mind the contents of the book:

Chapter

1. Power
2. Pentecost
3. Peter and John
4. Priests and prayer
5. Punishment
6. Poor Christians
7. Persecuted Stephen
8. Philip
9. Paul’s conversion
10. Peter’s vision
11. Peter’s explanation
12. Peter’s imprisonment
13. Paul’s first missionary journey
14. Paul’s return
15. Paul at Jerusalem
16. Paul’s second journey

17. Paul at Athens
18. Priscilla and Aquila
19. Paul's third journey
20. Paul in Europe
21. Paul's arrest
22. Paul's staircase address
23. Paul's escape
24. Paul before Felix
25. Paul before Festus
26. Paul before Agrippa
27. Paul shipwrecked
28. Paul at Rome

~ end of Acts ~

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